

Internationalism, Empire and Peace in *The Woman Teacher*, 1920-1939

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The vibrant political agenda that drove political and professional discussion in *The Woman Teacher*, the 'official organ' of the National Union of Women Teachers (NUWT)⁽¹⁾ was rooted in the Union's demand for equality on the same terms as men (King 1987: 35). *The Woman Teacher* challenged the view that a right to earn a living had been won as long as posts were closed to women and the statute book was 'littered up with restrictions which class women with non-adults' and contested Virginia Woolf's contention in *Three Guineas* that the word 'feminist' was obsolete (17 June 1938: 300). During the inter-war period *The Woman Teacher* encouraged NUWT members to create the will to peace through their work in schools. Stimulated by the deepening international crisis during the 1930s, the journal adopted an increasingly radical political stance towards internationalism, militarism and fascism. This chapter argues that articulations of internationalism, peace, imperialism and anti-fascism made visible dissent within views of the NUWT membership but also facilitated opportunities for journal editors to continue to shape the NUWT's egalitarian feminist message as the NUWT negotiated shifting understandings of feminism and rhetoric about married and single teachers linked with the pathologizing of spinsterhood (Oram 1996; Martin 2008).

The chapter builds on scholarship which points to the importance of *The Woman Teacher* in creating the NUWT's independent public political identity and the union's place within the wider national feminist movement (Kean 1990, Martin 1999, Oram 1996). Both the NUWT and *The Woman Teacher* were established in the face of hostility from male National Union of Teacher (NUT) members over whether suffrage and equal pay were admissible professional issues and because of the NUT's delay in implementing its equal pay policy (Oram 1996: 130). The journal was circulated to the NUWT membership, which stood at 8,500 in 1922 (Oram 1996: 144) and included lower-middle class women teachers (Copelman 1996: 224) working in state elementary schools, municipal secondary schools and institutions training women for the state education system. It was also provided free-of-charge to educational administrators, politicians and policy-makers. The journal kept the readership informed about the NUWT's feminist ideals and campaigns, the status and views of women teachers, and ongoing discussion of professional issues around equal pay, equal access to employment opportunities, the removal of the marriage bar, and education for girls (Copelman 1996, Kean 1987, King 1987, Martin 1999, Oram 1996).

Although *The Woman Teacher* was aimed at a professional readership, considerable space was afforded to discussion of internationalism, peace, imperialism and anti-fascism, areas of NUWT activity that are largely unexplored to date. The inter-war international situation drew feminists into questions of internationalism and peace (Alberti 1989: 218) and also prompted teachers' organisations of varying political hues to organise internationally (Simon and Van Daele 1987, Goodman 2007), in addition to their engagement with empire through bodies like the League of Empire, and participating in imperial education conferences (Crutchley 2015, Goodman, 2002). This chapter looks at these areas of activity by exploring how relationships between feminism, peace, internationalism, imperialism, anti-fascism and education were articulated in the journal's pages. It focuses on specific moments during the 1920s and 1930s when underlying visions, assumptions and differences amongst NUWT members around understandings of internationalism, empire and peace circulated in the journal. The chapter begins by tracing articulations in *The Woman Teacher* of links between equality, internationalism and peace, and between peace, liberal views of empire and their contestation. Later

sections focus on educational economies, anti-fascism, class and gender as the journal mapped women teachers' engagements in international political spaces.

The chapter draws on Benford and Snow's (2000) analysis of how organisations frame arguments underpinned by culturally resonant master (sic) frames in order to motivate members to collective action. Benford and Snow identify injustice frames and their relation to the motivational frames that provide rationales for collective action but which also constrain the range of possible ameliorations. They identify counterframing processes that contest the logic, or efficacy, of solutions advocated and provide alternative remedies. They see frames evolving through negotiated and contested processes of frame-amplification as frames are extended to include issues and concerns presumed to be of importance to potential adherents. Frame-amplification can increase disputes and lead to instability, but can also be facilitative. This chapter argues that articulations of diverse views of internationalism, peace, imperialism and anti-fascism in *The Woman Teacher* made visible dissent, but also facilitated spaces of opportunity for editors to continue to shape an egalitarian rights-based master (sic) frame in the context of 'new feminism' and the pathologizing of spinsterhood.

The Woman Teacher

The Woman Teacher's editors in the inter-war period were experienced feminist teachers and active NUWT members. Longest serving editor, Emily Phipps BA (editor, 1919-1930) was followed by Edith Crosby LLA (editor 1931-32), Ethel Stead BA (editor 1933-37) and Florence Key (editor from 1937) (Kean 1990: 86-7; Martin 2008: 119-29; Phipps 1928: 28-9). Phipps, Crosby and Key also served terms as NUWT president. NUWT annual reports do not provide circulation figures, but voluntary labour ensured the journal's financial health from the start (Phipps 1928: 54, 58). NUWT branch reports illustrate the growth in circulation that enabled administrative support to replace the volunteers who came to the NUWT London head office in the early days to parcel and address copies of the journal for distribution.

Phipps noted that the journal's chief end was 'propaganda' (8 January 1926: 110). There was to be: 'NO column for dress fashions, no cookery recipes, no descriptions of how to make bedroom suites out of packing cases, no accounts of 'presentations' on retirement.' Her comment - 'there was to be 'too much propaganda for that' (26 September 1919: 4) points to the stress the journal placed from its establishment on correcting misrepresented arguments about women teachers and about the NUWT itself. It also indicates the journal's intention to challenge a range of rival views (DiCenzo 2010: 82) including those of the NUT. This differentiated *The Woman Teacher* from earlier educational journals which included pre-war suffrage debates but which in Phipps' eyes largely ignored broader discussion of educational ideals and politics (Kean 1990: 48). *The Schoolmistress* had carried monthly reports of the National Federation of Women Teachers (NFWT) and accounts of the London County Council (LCC) Women Teachers' Union, while the conservative *Woman Teacher* (issued 1909-1912 and no relation to the NUWT's *The Woman Teacher*) endorsed suffrage and equal pay only towards the end of its publication run. *Women Teachers' World* (founded 1911), carried regular contributions from the LCC Women Teachers' Union and included reports of the NFWT and the Women Teachers' Franchise Union (WTFU) but dropped *Woman* from its title in 1913 (Copelman 1996: 215).

The 'objects' of the NUWT were displayed prominently in *The Woman Teacher* along with a growing list of NUWT publications, making clear the journal's organisational mandate to current and prospective NUWT members (DiCenzo 2010: 84). Running footers exhorted readers to pass copies to colleagues to aid recruitment and to alert them to the

range of NUWT benefits shaped around women teachers' circumstances, from mortgages and legal support to pensions. A strong educative element aimed to inform readers politically, professionally, educationally and socially (8 January 1926: 110). Regular features included political summaries of parliamentary proceedings and reprints of Board of Education circulars interpreted (often critically) for readers; articles on what were seen as the most up-to-date teaching methods; reviews of new books and apparatus; and reports and notices of conferences, lectures and demonstrations. Verbatim accounts of NUWT annual conference speeches and conference discussion enabled readers at a distance to 'hear' the voices of women delegates and officials in debate; and from the mid 1930s, photos of presidents and key speakers provided images of professional familiarity for readers, alongside adverts portraying the modern woman teacher as stylish in appearance and dress and committed professionally to acquiring the latest teaching equipment and books. Information about forthcoming political and social events, local and regional branch reports, the NUWT Travel Club, and advertisements for holiday tours and courses, mapped an increasing geographical spread both for the NUWT and the readership of *The Woman Teacher*. So did alerts to readers when the mainstream press or other sources picked up the journal's accounts of NUWT conferences or reprinted its information, which the journal used to demonstrate successful 'infiltration' of educational and political debate and of the mainstream press (DiCenzo 2010: 83).

The Woman Teacher was important for feminist teachers in a context of professional and political challenge. Women teachers in the state system undertook the same training and examinations as men but without a commensurate salary. Class structures differentiated their working conditions from women teachers in fee-paying private and public secondary schools for girls, where expectations increasingly required graduate study. Well-qualified state-sector elementary teachers working in mixed or single sex schools often did so alongside poorly qualified and unqualified teachers in shabby buildings, with large classes and low pay, and were subject to pressure from inspectors. In many localities women teachers were also required to resign on marriage. Such contradictions were conducive to honing feminist consciousness (Kean 6, 9; King 32) and were intensified by women elementary teachers' wartime experience, when they took on a variety of war-related volunteer activities, and taught temporarily in senior boys' departments. Partial suffrage led women teachers both 'to confidence, energy and expectations of continuous progress on feminist issues' (Copelman 1996: 230) and to a heightened sense of injustice, both of which underpinned the journal's egalitarian messages. In a context where the male-controlled NUT was recognised as representing elementary teachers in salary negotiations on the Burnham Committee and as the voice of elementary teachers when it came to liaising on tenure (Oram 1996: 154, 167). The NUWT's 'objects' declared the union's view that 'the true ends of education' could not be 'fully and completely served' until women teachers had 'right conditions of work and adequate means of expression in educational matters' (24 October 1919:33). Operating against a background of economies in education and a backlash against feminism, the journal was central in shaping and disseminating the NUWT's feminist and professional arguments over equal pay for women teachers, campaigns against the marriage bar, responses to attacks on single women workers and teachers, arguments about mixed schools and coeducation, efforts to stem the impact of school reorganisation on posts for women as headteachers, and calls to reform the elementary school curriculum, which stressed the girl as homemaker and assumed different educational requirements for boys and girls (13 February 1920: 165; 22 January 1932: 111; 11 June 1937: 310; Copelman 1996: 227-242; King 1987: 39).

The Woman Teacher urged its readership to forms of action that built pride in past feminist achievement and calls for commitment to the further pursuit of equality in an optimistic but nonetheless realistic vein. It drew on the experience of founding members of the NUWT, numbers of whom had been suffragettes and who saw a clear political relationship between their political activity and their careers (Kean 1990: 13). It celebrated the part women teachers played in securing the franchise (26 September 1919: 2) and exhorted readers to attend demonstrations and rallies (18 June 1926: 282). It formed a key tool in the NUWT's equal rights feminist platform in pursuit of the extension of women's suffrage.

In pursuing an egalitarian agenda, *The Woman Teacher* publicised the policies and activities of national and international organisations with whom the NUWT shared networks. It highlighted what it termed 'Equalitarian Societies' - the Six Point Group (SPG) the Women's Freedom League, the Open Door Council (ODC) and St Joan's Social and Political Alliance - with which the NUWT had reciprocal working relationships. The journal publicised their events and the NUWT provided speakers. These societies reciprocated with speakers to support NUWT initiatives around equal pay and the marriage bar, and lobbied for the inclusion of the NUWT in the Burnham Committee's deliberations on teachers' salaries (16 May 1924: 250, 19 September 1924: 354, 3 October 1924: 10).

The rise of 'new feminism' during the 1920s and 1930s illustrated an attempt to rethink the economic basis of the family and the relationship of the state to the citizen. New feminism viewed a father's responsibility to maintain mothers and children, and the resulting dependence of mothers, as inimical to equality at work. Only a measure of 'endowment', it was argued, would lighten a father's responsibility and make equal pay just and possible, by recognising mothers as workers. 'Endowment' would ensure mothers received their fair share of a wage by bypassing the husband entirely and operating directly between the woman and the state based on woman's own contribution as citizen through motherhood. Such views saw state-aid to mothers as compatible with a feminist concern for women's economic independence (Pedersen 1995: 140-146, 307).

While some NUWT members were drawn to a 'new feminism', 'new feminist' views contrasted with the NUWT's egalitarian arguments that aimed to protect women's work rights by linking equal pay with equal opportunities (Kean 1990: 107). Like the SPG and the ODC, *The Woman Teacher* argued that 'equal pay for women and state payments to mothers' were not 'two versions of the same issue' (30 November 1928: 62). The NUWT withdrew from the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship on the grounds that family allowances were not relevant to the claim for equal pay for equal work regardless of the sex of the worker (Kean 1990: 110). During Key's editorship readers of the journal also negotiated discussions of marriage inflected with negative attitudes towards unmarried women that pathologised spinsters' sexuality (Copelman 1996: 235-6; Martin 2008).

The egalitarian agenda and motivational frame articulated in *The Woman Teacher* built on a rights-based 'master (sic) frame', underpinned by discussion in the journal's pages of examples of professional and political injustices to which women teachers were subject. Editorials in the journal, particularly from Phipps and Key negotiated the counter-framing from 'new feminism' that was attracting some members (Kean 1990: 112-13; Martin 2008). Particularly during Steads editorship from 1933, increasing numbers of articles opposing militarism and outlining the negative impact for women of fascism amplified the journal's frame of reference. The following sections argue that while the articulation of diverse views of internationalism, peace, imperialism and anti-fascism held the potential to increase dissent within the NUWT, frame-amplification facilitated spaces through which the journal could continue to shape its egalitarian message.

Equality, Peace and Empire

In an editorial entitled 'Women and Warmongers', *The Woman Teacher* portrayed 'The Women's Movement' as 'no separate thing from the Peace Movement' (26 June 1936: 315). A 1933 editorial linked concern for peace with an equal rights stance in an argument about peace and childhood that facilitated space for the restatement of egalitarian principles:

We must refuse acquiescence in an order of things that debases the woman's status in society ... Women are free humans in their own right equally with men and are worthy of regard. Whether they are, or are not mothers, has no bearing on their individual importance, and if they fulfil the parental role, it shall not be in order that the state may use their children as soldiers and protectors of other men's property and lives, but that they may live as free, happy members of an ordered peaceful community (12 May 1933: 133).

The journal argued that peace was necessary to the achievement of equality, so it was a feminist teacher's ethical responsibility to work for peace, (26 June 1936: 315). A recurrent theme in *The Woman Teacher* was the need for teachers to create the will to peace through education and the journal publicised a range of curricular initiatives to this end (11 January 1935: 107-8; 21 January 1938: 127; 20 January 1939: 119,120). It carried information on teaching world citizenship (22 February 1924: 229-30; 31 August 1934: 595) in relation to current events (1 July 1938: 321; 21 April 1939: 216) and to international relations (17 March 1939: 186). It encouraged modern foreign languages in the primary school (15 March 1929: 159; 26 February 1930: 178-9) and stressed teaching Esperanto as a means to international understanding (23 October 1925: 36; 23 May 1930: 216-7; 8 June 1934: 537; 9 December 1938: 71; 23 June 1939: 283).

Ideals of the League of Nations and calls for teachers to engage with activities of the League of Nations Union (LNU) ran as a thread from early issues of *The Woman Teacher* onwards. The journal informed readers about NUWT representation on the LNU's Education Committee and its Women's Advisory Committee (11 January 1924: 106, 19 February 1932: 149). It discussed the League of Nations' principle that 'men and women should receive equal remuneration for work of equal value' and pointed to the unequal pay of women working in the Geneva Secretariat and the lack of women in delegations to League Assemblies (9 November 1928: 34, 37; 7 December 1928: 68; 11 January 1929: 86). It publicised a range of LNU activities with which teachers could engage, including the formation of LNU junior branches, LNU speakers and films, textbook revision, LNU lessons on international matters and current affairs, special assemblies, pageants, musical performances, peace celebrations, pen-pal schemes, and summer schools and camps in Britain, Geneva and elsewhere (Caedel 2007: 7; McCarthy 2011: 103-31).

The LNU was 'pacifist' in orientation in that it espoused international co-operation as the best means to abolish war but was willing to countenance military intervention as the price of upholding the rule of international law (McCarthy 2011: 3). From 1933 it placed greater stress on strengthening the League's collective security system in the wake of the Geneva Disarmament Conference, when tensions around how to reconcile disarmament and security, and how to prevent German rearmament, bolstered a shift of opinion in Britain away from total disarmament to stringent arms reduction and limitation (Kyba 1982: 31). In this shifting context, *The Woman Teacher* illustrated increasingly diverse positions among NUWT members around peace. In 1932 the journal highlighted the international Declaration on World Disarmament organised by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom prior to the Disarmament Conference, charted NUWT engagement in the British peace procession, and called members to attend

disarmament meetings and demonstrations (15 January 1932: 95). Exemplified by Nan McMillan's 1939 presidential address, the journal also published text that linked 'political dogma[s]' that 'deprived women of professional, economic and social rights' with advocacy of collective resistance to aggression alongside peaceful settlement of disputes between nations (13 January 1939: 87).

The Woman Teacher disseminated different shades of political opinion around the relation between peace and empire. The journal reported that at the 1928 NUWT conference Miss Cooper, a member of the NUWT central council argued:

many years ago children were taught to think imperially, now they were being taught to think internationally.... Older pupils could be shown how the League stands for the welfare of children, women, natives and workers ... Gradually we were preparing a generation of people who would view international questions dispassionately, remembering that each nation is made up of their brothers and sisters (20 January 1928: 126).

Such comments were consistent with the LNU's portrayal of the League of Nations as a commonwealth of nations, a model of empire that overlooked the exploitation of empire by seeing nations in a commonwealth cooperating harmoniously for the good of the whole. This model was developed by (among others) Alfred Zimmern (1918, 1926), deputy director of the League of Nations Institute of Intellectual Cooperation in Paris from 1926 to 1930. Zimmern saw the commonwealth as a voluntary association of free and equal nations and identified nations as familial units and internationalism as inter-communication between the families of mankind. This paternalistic view of empire was consonant with models of League of Nations' trusteeship around the 'progress' of civilisation (Morefield 2005: 106), which inflected Miss Cooper's comments on the League's 'welfare of ... natives.'

The Woman Teacher also carried accounts of NUWT engagement with the British Commonwealth League (BCL) (17 July 1925: 331; 21 June 1929: 242), which aimed 'to secure equality of liberties, status and opportunities between men and women in the British Commonwealth of Nations' (Woollacott 2010: 224), and at whose conferences, the journal reported, resolutions were supported calling for equal pay (24 July 1925: 337-8). The BCL's internationalist vision 'broke with the British Empire and Commonwealth mould' (Woollacott 2010: 224) but also retained continuities in seeing commonwealth feminists continuing to be 'responsible' for 'less fortunate sisters' (226). *The Woman Teacher's* accounts of Birmingham NUWT branch meetings illustrate commensurate continuities and shifts around views of empire. The journal noted that Mrs Whittles from the National Publicity Campaign for the Status of Women drew on a longstanding trope of anti-slavery when she commented, it was 'a blot on our Empire that women should still be bought and sold within its confines', a situation she traced to inequalities in education as facilities were offered first to boys (3 June 1938: 294). The following year Mr Podmore, 'the negro writer and speaker', discussed the status of native people within the British Empire, with reference to the West Indies, Kenya and other parts of Africa, pointing out that 'the average workmen working for white employers, have little chances of education ... and in places like Kenya, where the coloured population far outnumbers the white, the native people have no voice in the government' (31 March 1939: 206). Such comment demonstrates a wider dissemination of the impact of the 'white man and the spread of western industrialism' that the journal had reported from the BCL's 1931 conference (3 July 1931: 254).

For NUWT members, views on the relation between empire, militarism and peace were sharpened around the practicalities of celebrating empire day in schools. Verbatim accounts of the disparate views of NUWT conference delegates on how members should

engage with empire day at times contested assumptions of empire as a commonwealth of nations cooperating harmoniously for the good of the whole (18 January 1935: 133-4). While frame-amplification that included childhood facilitated spaces for the restatement of egalitarian principles, discussion of empire day and increasingly diverse positions among NUWT members around peace illustrated dissent characteristic of the risks of frame-amplification. At the same, it also provided space for the restatement of egalitarian principles. Journal editorials argued that militarism itself was inimical to women, with a 1933 editorial entitled 'Feminism versus Militarism', noting that feminism was the most important reason why NUWT members needed to understand their part in the peace movement, so that women might live as 'free humans in their own right equally with men ... as free happy members of an ordered peaceful community (12 May 1933: 133). Discussion of the opposition between feminism and militarism also fed into concerns increasingly explored in the journal about the rise of fascism, to which the following two sections turn.

Class, Economies, Fascism and War

Women teachers formed the bulk of the state-maintained school workforce that educated the working-class. In their adult lives women teachers in the state-maintained sector were part of the lower-middle class. As with editors and contributors to the journal, the readership of *The Woman Teacher* often had close and professional links with the working class. To demonstrate the detrimental impact of educational economies on working-class children's education from cuts in education budgets during the 1920s and 1930s, *The Woman Teacher* regularly presented comparative analysis of the low expenditure on state education when compared with other areas of the economy such as 'drink', tobacco and 'pleasure motoring' (11 February 1921: 149). Resonating with comparative economic arguments used elsewhere to argue that money freed up from 'unproductive' spending on defence could be used more productively (McCarthy 2011: 170), both the journal and NUWT conference delegates linked arguments for equal pay to questions of armaments and disarmament (16 January 1931: 94).

The Woman Teacher's account of Birmingham headteacher Hilda Walmesley's analysis of the impact of defence spending on English education delivered in August 1933 at the Paris *Congres International D'Unité du Corps Enseignant*, shows that comparative analysis of financial spending was also deployed as a strategy in international peace-activism to argue that spending on armaments led to a lack of funding for state education that disadvantaged working class pupils (29 January 1932: 124):

England budgets for roughly £8000,000,000 a year and carries a National Debt of £7,500,000,000 which was increased by £20,000,000 only last year and will increase further. She spends £106,000,000 on Defence alone ... and £42,000,000 on the education of 6,000,000 of her children in State Schools. One million of these children can be educated for one year, therefore for £7,000,000 which is less than the cost of a first class battleship (£8,000,000). Further a first class battleship costs £400,000 annually to maintain a price for which 57,000 children could be educated for a similar period. While the estimates of the Military services had advanced by £1,500,000 in 1933 those for education decreased by £5,500,000 in spite of the fact that there were 61,000 additional children in attendance at school (29 September 1933: 236).

In January 1934, *The Woman Teacher* announced that the NUWT had affiliated with The International Committee of the Teaching Profession against War, Economies, and Fascism (ICTPWEF) (12 January 1934: 332), at whose *Congres D'Unité* Walmesley had

spoken and where, *The Woman Teacher* reported, she had 'secured the inclusion of an egalitarian programme' (12 January 1934: 332). The ICTPWEF aimed to unite teachers internationally in order to overturn economies in education and to organise relief for German colleagues who were victims of the Nazi regime. Walmesley's written report of their August 1933 congress (Walmesley: Summary of Resolutions) on which *The Woman Teacher's* account drew (29 September 1932), illustrates that the congress viewed imperialism as a root cause of fascism, a stance that resonated with communist views that capitalism mutated to fascism. In affiliating with the ICTPWEF, the NUWT linked with the Educational Workers International, the Central Committee of Young Teachers, the Students' Anti Economy Committee and the Teachers' Anti-War Movement and so engaged with popular front manifestations through which communists turned from the isolation of the class against class position adopted by the Comintern to countermand the rise of fascist regimes after Hitler's rise to power in 1933 (Bruley 1985:141; Callaghan and Harker 2011: 125). The congress located the struggle not as a struggle of professionals but as a struggle in which teachers as workers were to unite with other workers. It issued an Appeal to all organisations, to serving and trainee teachers, and to cultural workers of all parties and of every 'race' to join in the struggle against economies in educational expenditure; against reductions in teachers' standard of living; against militarism in schools; false patriotism; and fascism and war. Even in so-called democratic countries, it warned, a policy of cuts and more rigid control was being applied to schools, as imperialist powers prepared for war and sought to turn the minds of the people to war by denouncing the militarism of other nations, or by calling for the defence of the peace treaties, or for an attack on the 'unjust peace of Versailles' (International Committee: Summary of Appeal; Kavanagh 2014: 209). The first task of the ICTPWEF was to organise financial support for German teachers (Walmesley: Summary of Resolutions). Walmesley's appeal for aid for women teachers suffering under the Nazi regime carried in *The Woman Teacher* (16 February 1934: 410) restated an egalitarian agenda in drawing attention to 'attacks on their womanhood, professional liberty and freedom of choice in occupation' (18 May, 1934: 522).

Women Against Fascism and War

From 1933, *The Woman Teacher* warned of the dangers that the rise of fascism posed for women, for teachers, for education, for liberals, for pacifists and for international movements. The journal demonstrates the range of feminist responses to fascism that Gottlieb (2005) outlines: an emphasis on the plight of women, discussion of the imprisonment and torture of women; appreciation of national historical and cultural differences; drawing on personal and private experience; and categorising women as victims of patriarchal states. An editorial in *The Woman Teacher* entitled 'Fascism and Women' (15 September 1933: 215) argued that the political creed of fascism was the supremacy of the state and that the individual was insignificant apart from as a disciplined and tacit figure in the state scheme. It informed readers that fascism was a method of rule through a dictatorship that suppressed all democratic and parliamentary institutions, and that its main supporters were from the 'non-intellectual' classes, the 'military and industrialist castes' and certain sections of the middle classes. Fascism, warned the editorial gained its vigour and absolutism as a result of its glamour for the timid and for youth, and the dramatic and colourful ways it organised. In further articles *The Woman Teacher* portrayed a reign of terror sweeping Germany, with communists, progressive people of all shades of opinion and Jewish people placed beyond the protection of the law. An unattributed review of *The Brown Book of the Hitler Terror* noted that workers'

organisations in Germany, including teachers' organisations, had either become Nazi organisations or had been suppressed (29 September 1933: 239).

An editorial entitled 'Women and Fascism' contrasted democracy with fascism, arguing that 'there can be no real freedom of the people in which women do not share equally with men'. It warned readers:

under a true democracy all the human rights enjoyed by men were enjoyed by women without any qualification whatever, but under a military dictatorship like fascism women became ciphers in the state machine and lost all their individual rights, including their citizen rights to vote, to be elected to national assemblies and their right to earn (15 September 1933: 215).

Readers were warned that in Germany married women might not earn, nor might single women whose families could keep them, and that women's right to be educated was diminished, with women unwelcome in higher education and being fitted only for marriage and motherhood: 'As *persons* in their own right they may have no existence' (ibid.). *The Woman Teacher's* report of Monica Whately's speech at an NUWT event noted her references to her experience in Spain and included her plea to continue the fight for equality in the context of the rise of fascist dictatorships that had 'smashed or camouflaged' all feminist movements (25 September 1936: 397). Whatley, who led the SPG's anti-fascist activity (Gottlieb 2010) and contributed a regular column in *The Woman Teacher* on LCC education policy, had been supported by the NUWT in her successful Limehouse election campaign, and *The Woman Teacher* advertised her 1935 book *Women Behind Nazi Bars* (6 December 1935: 79). Like Whatley, Winifred Holtby contributed to NUWT campaigns on equal pay (25 October 1929: 26-7; 15 January 1932: 92) as well as to *The Woman Teacher* (11 October 1935: 4), and the journal carried a review of her *Women and A Changing Civilisation*, which as Gottlieb (2005: 77-78) notes, included a comparative sociological approach to the rise of authoritarian regimes. When *The Woman Teacher* advertised the debate between Wilfred Risdon, of the British Union of Fascists and Ellen Wilkinson, it pointed to the personal insights from first hand testimony that Wilkinson would bring to the debate as a result of her recent presence in Germany (16 February 1934: 404). An editorial entitled 'The Crisis of World Affairs', asked of 'women admirers of Fascism' whether they had considered the consequences of fascism for women and revelations about the treatment of women in concentration camps (31 August 1934: 595).

The Woman Teacher publicised the NUWT's affiliation with the Women's World Committee Against War and Fascism, which held a World Congress in Paris in 1934. Rather than making a specific appeal to working-class women, the Women's World Committee promoted women's unity against war and fascism above political affiliation of social class. It was amongst the first organisations to organise relief work for Spain and to work for the release of women in German concentration camps. As both Bruley and Gottlieb argue, although a very wide variety of women were involved in the Women's Committee Against War and Fascism, women closely connected with the Communist Party were very much to the fore (Gottlieb 2005: 25; Bruley 1984: 131-156). *The Woman Teacher* recorded the NUWT's representation on the British branch of the Women's World Committee (26 October 1934: 25) and that NUWT Council member Nan McMillan spoke at a 1936 Women's World Committee meeting against excessive expenditure on war purposes in the budget estimates (29 March 1935: 220). The journal also rallied NUWT members to join the NUWT contingent taking part in the 1936 Women's World Committee Trafalgar Square demonstration (1 May 1936: 262).

While the breadth of interests encompassed by the Women's World Committee suggests that it formed an expression of a feminist pacifism, rather than a more sophisticated feminist anti-fascist critique (Gottlieb 2005: 83), for the women teachers of

the NUWT a political landscape which brought them into working relationships with communists, either through the Women's World Committee Against War and Fascism, or through the ICTPWEF, was a terrain to be negotiated with care. Walmesley noted that the 'Universal character of the [Paris] Congress was stressed as a very necessary precaution against its identification with Communist policy' (Walmesley: Summary of Resolutions). Consternation was caused in the NUWT when a report of McMillan's speech at a *Daily Worker* conference implied that the NUWT endorsed a popular front stance; and when McMillan became NUWT vice-president (1938) and then president (1939) several members refused to pay their subscriptions because of her Communist Party membership (Kavanagh 2014: 215).

In *The Woman Teacher*, engagement in international spaces around anti-fascism brought into sharper focus the importance of vigilance around civil liberties and academic freedom in Britain (11 January 1935: 107-8). For *The Woman Teacher* it highlighted the need for readers to be aware of the heritage of the feminist movement and to understand feminist philosophy. In 1935, the journal noted that in the light of attacks on the economic freedom of women, the main task of journals like *The Woman Teacher* was to educate women on the grave menace of fascism to which questions of economic freedom linked. As such it was important to consider 'the philosophy underlying the feminist case' and the reasons for agitation around for justice in equal pay and the right of women to apply for the higher educational positions for: 'any piecemeal victory gained will be insecure if that greater thing is not achieved - the recognition of the equal value and dignity of the personality of the woman with that of the man' (11 January 1935: 115).

While everyday experience based on close and professional links with the working was salient in framing professional and political geographies inflected by class, dangers inherent in frame-amplification were illustrated as these geographies were articulated through a range of voices in *The Woman Teacher*, exemplified by the consternation caused by reports of McMillan's activities. But frame-amplification also facilitated spaces for the re-statement of egalitarian agendas and of feminist philosophy.

Conclusion

Editorials, articles, and conference accounts in *The Woman Teacher* along with calls to women teachers to participate in meetings and demonstrations, to implement peace education and anti-militaristic practice, to adopt anti-fascist stances, and to support German women teachers suffering under national socialism, illustrate a diversity of views, visions and standpoints that women brought to the active pursuit of peace and differences and shifts in the views and visions of empire that underpinned their peace-activism. Accounts in the journal of teachers who saw empire and commonwealth as a voluntary association of free and equal nations based on the model of inter-communication between the families of mankind alongside reports of activities that included teachers for whom imperialism lay at the root of fascism, illustrates a vibrancy that contests the notion of an inter-war feminist retreat.

What is striking amongst the internationalist, imperialist and anti-fascist narratives, engagements, networks and professional and political geographies that played out across the inter-war period in the pages of *The Woman Teacher* are the opportunities the journal took to link diverse messages to a rights-based commitment to advance the emancipation of women generally and of women teachers in particular. These included messages about the necessity for teachers to work for peace in order to achieve equality (26 June 1936: 315), the use of comparative methodologies to argue for equitable financial disbursements for state-maintained education and to argue for equal pay, and

warnings that women lost all rights under fascist regimes, which heightened the need for equality as well as vigilance in civil and academic freedom.

The diversity of narratives around peace-activism and empire in *The Woman Teacher* illustrate alternative diagnoses of the politics of peace, empire and fascism that caused a measure of dissent. In the context of the counterframings from ‘new feminism’ that attracted some NUWT members, and against a background in which unmarried teachers were pathologized, frame-amplification also facilitated spaces in which the NUWT’s egalitarian rights-based feminist ‘master (sic) frame’ could continue to be articulated in the journal. Despite different diagnoses of empire and fascism, and for some members of feminism, NUWT members shared everyday experiences of teaching in the state elementary sector that were salient as the journal sought to build professional women teachers into a community of ‘consolidated womanhood’ (26 September 1919: 2) imbued with feminist ideals.

Note

- (1) *The Woman Teacher* was established in 1919 as an ‘official organ’ by feminist teachers belonging to the NFWT, a pressure group within the mixed National Union of Teachers (NUT) that merged with the WTFU, founded 1912, and broke away from the NUT to form the NUWT in 1919). Thanks to the University of Winchester for funding the research and to Dr Andrea Jacobs for data collection in the NUWT archive (UCL Institute of Education). For the digital archive of *The Woman Teacher* see <http://ioearc.da.ulcc.ac.uk>

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